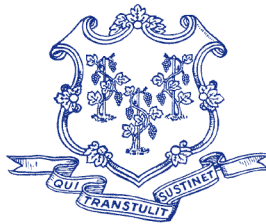


SENATOR MARTIN M. LOONEY
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March 11, 2022

Good morning Senator Cohen, Senator Haskell, Representative Gresko, Representative Lemar, and esteemed members of the Environment and Transportation Committees. I am here to testify in strong support of SB 4: CONNECTICUT'S CLEAN AIR ACT to protect human health and the climate.

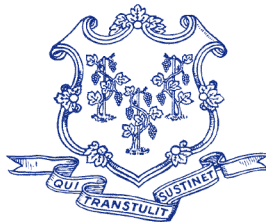
According to data from the EPA, in 2021, Connecticut had 21 days with unhealthy levels of ozone – the highest in New England and far surpassing Rhode Island which was the next highest with 5 unhealthy days.¹ This same data shows that Fairfield County is the county with the highest ozone levels in the eastern half of the nation. And New Haven, Middlesex, New London, Tolland, and Windham received “F” grades on ozone levels from the American Lung Association’s 2020 “State of the Air” report. Hartford County received a “D” grade and Litchfield County received a “C” grade.² Exposure to elevated levels of ozone can aggravate lung diseases such as asthma and emphysema, and long-term exposure can increase susceptibility to respiratory infections such as pneumonia, can increase the likelihood of reproductive and developmental harm including reduced fertility, stillbirth, and low birth weight, and can impact the central nervous system including possible increased risk of cognitive decline.

¹ <https://www3.epa.gov/region1/airquality/standard.html>

² <https://www.lung.org/research/sota/city-rankings/states/connecticut>

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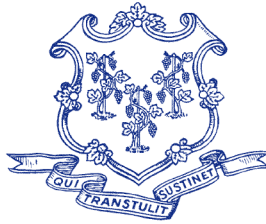
Moreover, studies across the nation have found that there are stark disparities in who is exposed to pollution and that the burden of living with polluted air is not shared equally. People of color are over three times more likely to be breathing heavily polluted air than white people. A study that ranked the urban areas across the United States with the largest racial disparities in exposure to harmful pollutants like nitrogen dioxide ranked the Bridgeport-Stamford area 3rd, New Haven area 8th, and Hartford area 14th.³ Nitrogen dioxide is listed as one of the seven key pollutants the EPA monitors, is linked to asthma symptoms and heart disease, and comes from sources like vehicle exhaust.

That's why I'm proud that the Senate Democratic Caucus and my colleagues have made Connecticut's Clean Air Act and reducing emissions caused by the transportation section one of our top priorities this session. Wide-scale electric vehicle deployment has been identified as one of the primary solutions for achieving the state's statutorily required economy-wide greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction targets. This legislation has the state of Connecticut lead by example by requiring that one hundred percent of all cars and light-duty vehicles purchased or leased by the state be electric vehicles by 2030.

³ <https://www.eurekalert.org/news-releases/862658>

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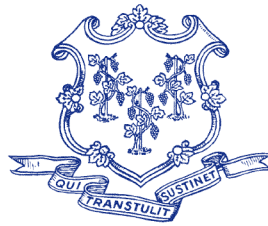


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Connecticut is also one of several states that have signed onto the Zero-Emission Vehicle Memorandum of Understanding where we committed to the ambitious goal of getting between 125,000 to 150,000 electric vehicles on the road by 2025. However, currently, there are only [21,382 electric vehicles](#) registered in Connecticut and electric vehicles account for only 2 percent of annual sales of light-duty vehicles. This indicates that electric vehicles are still in an early adoption phase. That is why we must do more to support widespread commercialization of electric vehicles amongst the general public and a variety of sectors.

As such, this legislation makes transformative reforms to the CHEAPR program. Electric vehicles are cleaner and cheaper to drive than convention, gas-powered cars but cost more upfront than conventional vehicles. This legislation supports our small businesses, nonprofits and towns reduce fuel and maintenance costs associated with their fleets by making them eligible for these electric vehicle rebates. Importantly, this legislation focuses on making sure that the CHEAPR program is equitable and accessible for communities of color and low-income communities that are most directly impacted by air pollution. It does this by expanding eligibility and increasing the incentives of the CHEAPR+ program for residents living in environmental justice communities and residents with household incomes at or below 300 percent of the federal poverty level. The literature is consistent in showing that rebates and other incentives tend to influence electric vehicle purchases more effectively among lower-income buyers than among higher-income buyers. And that rebates were the deciding factor among lower-income



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consumers who chose to purchase an electric vehicle rather than a conventional vehicle.⁴

The changes this legislation contemplates make the program more equitable and more effective.

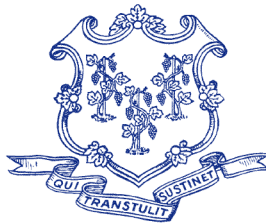
The legislation also recognizes that to increase electric vehicle adoption the state must ensure that EV charging infrastructure is available throughout all communities in the state. This is accomplished through establishing a grant program targeted at rural communities for EV charging stations and related infrastructure. As well as adopting “right to charge” legislation passed by states like New York, Colorado, Florida, Oregon and California to provide residents at multi-unit dwellings with the right to install a charging station at their designated parking spot.

This legislation also recognizes the historic Infrastructure Legislation passed by President Biden. It requires that the state stop purchasing any diesel fueled transit buses starting in January 2024 and includes bond funds to leverage these federal dollars to transition hundreds of diesel school buses to electric buses. Studies show that our kids and residents are exposed to high concentrations of toxic emissions that cause respiratory diseases and worsen existing conditions like asthma while they are waiting for, boarding, and riding on buses. Transitioning our bus fleets away from diesel is a commonsense solution to protecting our climate, protecting our children and our residents. This legislation also makes a historic shift in the way we plan our transportation projects and tackles the counter-intuitive concept of induced demand – in that widening highways and

⁴ https://escholarship.org/content/qt3kj611tv/supp/AB_615_Policy_Brief_Apr2020.pdf

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building more roads actually *increases* congestion and therefore emissions.⁵ It does this by ensuring that new regionally significant transportation projects that the Department of Transportation, towns, and regional organizations plan to construct with state funding must estimate the emissions created by the project, take into account the induced demand, and if the project increases emissions offset such emissions by undertaking greenhouse gas mitigation projects including but not limited to improving public transit, constructing bikeways, pedestrian walkways and more.

This legislation makes great strides in the urgent and necessary undertaking of reducing our transportation related greenhouse gas emissions and addressing the intersecting issues of human health, racial disparities and clean air. I thank all the advocates and the proponents for their tireless work and dedication on this legislation and I ask that you all support this bill. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Martin Looney".

Martin M. Looney
Senate President Pro Tempore

⁵ <https://t4america.org/2021/10/20/say-hello-to-induced-demand/>